

## **The Village Cemetery History**

The Village cemetery, received its first occupant, Elvira Knight, on September 15, 1818. She was the daughter of Ira and Abigail (Pratt) Knight. At that time, the plot had not been recognized as a burial place. Mrs. Knight would not give consent for the burial until my grandfather, John Jones, assured her that if the lot were not used for this purpose, as a cemetery, he would have the body removed to the West Burying ground.

In September of 1817, Bethuel Miller was paid \$7.75, T.P. Richardson \$15.91 and Patrick Giffin \$12.50 for fencing this village burial yard. By "fencing" is understood building a wall about it. In 1830 the yard was walled by Samuel Brackett and Farnum Miller, who were paid \$29.87 for doing the work. On June 18, 1819, the Town purchased from Josiah Washburn that part now known as the Old part, because the utilizing of the water power on the Ashuelot gave evidence that the "Plains" would become the business center of the town and need for this as a burial place would be imperative.

In September 1821, James Oaks was paid \$10.75 for building a fence about this cemetery. David Buss received \$2.42 for repairing the fence about the burying yard at South Marlow in October 1831. In July 1834, Samuel Brackett and Samuel Morrison received \$77.85 for building the wall about the same. This doubtless would be on the west, north and east sides, the fence being kept on the road side. When the new part was added in 1856, the west wall became part of the bank wall between the two parts. In building the bank wall on the west side of "Woodside", the north wall of both old and new parts was used, the wall construction being under the supervision of Kilgore.

In the laying out of the lots, the old time method was followed, that of large double lots with passageways north and south between every other double lot. Careless sextons soon ignored this lotting, giving us great irregularity. A re-survey in 1866 corrected, in a measure, much of this. The double lots were sub-divided, as conditions would permit, into lots nine feet by sixteen feet wide, with an aisle two feet wide running north and south between lots.

The new part, which lay immediately west of the old, was acquired by the town in 1833, when the Washburn land was subdivided into lots and sold by the town. The first burial in the new part was Mrs. Mamdama (Giffin) Mack, wife of Orville Mack. The lots in this part were ten feet by sixteen feet in size, with a road running east and west passing between each two lots with

paths each five feet wide between lots, and paths four feet wide running north and south between each lot. On the extreme west side, there are two rows of lots with a roadway on the east side of the lots. There is similar road on each side of cemetery next to the bank wall. This arrangement renders each lot easily accessible.

The numbering of lots begins at the northwest corner following south and back on the two rows of lots, then following the north row of lots to the old part. Then, beginning at the west side on the second row of lots, one follows east and so successively.

In 1904, a seeming demand for new lots led the town to buy from Henry A. Phelps, Lorin Messer, John Q. Jones and Lydia D. Jones, a plot on the north side of the old and new parts, this newer part being called Northside. The first buried in it was Mrs. Cynthia G. Jones, wife of John Jones, my mother. This was sometime before its purchase by the town. The lotting follows that in the new part. Before giving the first of the burials in Northside, it is proper to say that in 1856 we re-lotted and numbered all graves in the new and old parts, and made a map to which was added that of Northside in 1904. A record book was made which showed, at that time, the name of every person buried excepting three.

When the new part was added, much grading and filling was necessary. The bank walls on the east side and south were built, as well as the tomb. The Hearse House was built in 1856, standing on the division line between the new and old parts of the north line. It was moved for a time to a spot at the south west corner of the old part, and at a later it was moved across the highway to its present site on land purchased from heirs of Hebert Weeks, (the Elisha Buss homestead).

In a land trade with Timothy Jones ( descendant of Elgin Jones) the town added more property to the Village Cemetery in 1976.

The Cemetery contains 4 Sections: 1819, 1856, 1915 and Perpetual Care ( Northside) Section. All sections are maintained by the town. Peperual Care funds, held in trust by the Marlow Trustees of the Trust Fund, pay for the care and maintenance of the perpetual care plots.

The stone wall above Church street was reconstructed by the Cemetery Trustees in 2001 and in 2006 the Marlow Historical Society planted Liberty Elms on the area below the stonewall.

In 2007 the cemetery was surveyed and new plots were platted to increase the plots to 970. These new plots include full burial and cremation plots.

Three years ago the Trustees, using income from the McCourt Trust, began the preservation of the Village Cemetery gravestones by repairing and resetting gravestones. Work will continue each year until all stones in need of repair, resetting and cleaning are complete.